

Travel 7
Reports (Domestic)
Chrono

6 May 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, Research and Reports

SUBJECT: Report on Attendance at the Annual Meetings of the
Association of American Geographers, 18-21 April 1960

25X1A 1. Purpose and Personnel of Trip

a. [REDACTED] geographers from the GHA attended the 56th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers held in Dallas, Texas, for the purpose of renewing contacts with other members of their profession, to hear papers on a wide range of topics, presented by geographers from all parts of the United States and from some foreign countries.

b. Nine members of the group attended the meetings on official travel orders, using government-provided aircraft for travel:

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[REDACTED]

c. Eleven members of the group attended the meetings on normal duty status, using government-provided aircraft for travel:

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[REDACTED]

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d. One member of the group, [REDACTED] attended the meetings and subsequently proceeded beyond Dallas on other official business before returning to headquarters.

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e. This report covers the activities of all the above listed personnel for the period of the meetings.

f. The following persons were also passengers on the government-provided aircraft and attended the meetings:

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2. Activities

a. The CIA personnel attended, as their interests dictated, presentations of papers on economic geography, transportation geography, history of geography, agricultural geography, climatology, industrial and manufacturing geography, urban geography, marketing geography, cultural geography, geographic studies on Eastern Europe, physical and bio-geography, cartography, historical geography, statistical and measurement geography, military geography (as taught in service schools), and a geographic symposium on Scandinavia. Each of the sessions included from 5 to 9 papers on selected aspects of the topics and provoked a good deal of lively discussion.

b. Several members of the group participated in two field trips which had been arranged for attendees at the meetings. One of the trips was an all day trip which provided a cross sectional study of the area lying between Dallas and the Arbuckle Mountains in southern Oklahoma. The second trip provided an opportunity for a brief study of the urban area of Dallas.

c. Contacts were renewed with members of the geographic profession and appropriate exchanges of views and information were conducted. Contacts were also made with several foreign geographers who were in attendance at the meetings. In those instances where sources of possible intelligence potential were identified, pertinent information has been made available to the appropriate officers for subsequent exploitation.

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d. In addition, there were numerous interesting exhibits presented by universities, book and map publishers, and equipment manufacturers which were examined by the members attending.

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3. Difficulties

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With the increasing participation of Soviet Bloc personnel in the meetings of the AAG the matter of professional affiliation seems to be taking on a more serious tone. Participants in the meetings from other governmental agencies usually identify their agency. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] affiliation. One Polish participant observed that the only government (U. S.) geographer he knew was the "intelligence geographer, [REDACTED] who has [REDACTED] all over the world." The observation was parried with the remark that the person questioned worked for the Department of Defense and that there were geographers working in many offices of the U. S. Government. The Census Bureau and the Department of Interior were cited as other offices in which geographers were employed. In addition, the AAG published a list of those registered at the meetings, and most of our people were listed as being with the U. S. Government, a listing that is rather conspicuous among the varied affiliations given by other geographers at the meetings. It is felt that the public listing of so many people in this manner, and with this affiliation, is undesirable. It may be well to consider the more extensive use [REDACTED] for CIA personnel attending such meetings in the future.

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4. Commitments

None.

5. Evaluation of Trip

The trip was highly beneficial to those attending in that it provided an opportunity to renew contact with geographers in universities and non-governmental institutions; enabling the group to learn of research programs under way which are of direct intelligence interest to the IRAs; provided knowledge of new techniques and methodology; and generally served to stimulate thinking along professional lines. The air flight to and from the meetings, and the field trips, were most valuable to geographers in that they provided the opportunity for the observation of various phenomena in the landscape from both the air and the ground. Considerable intelligence used in the normal duty assignments of many of the members of this group is collected in these ways and this experience will assist them in evaluating the reliability of information derived in this manner.

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6. Recommendations

a. For the reason stated in paragraph 5, it is recommended that the practice of encouraging the maximum permissible numbers of GRA personnel to attend AAG meetings be continued.

b. One of the members of the GRA was listed in the official program of the meetings as discussant of one of the papers presented; his affiliation was given as U. S. Government. This being the case it is recommended that the members of the GRA, in attendance of such meetings, be given explicit permission to engage in informal discussion of papers which are within their field of competence and which will not involve the disclosure of classified sources or materials. There is a reluctance on the part of GRA attendees at these meetings to speak out when they have a legitimate difference of opinion with the ideas expressed or when they could make a useful contribution to the presentation. The reluctance is born, of course, from their security indoctrination and its implications. A statement outlining the conditions and methods for such participation would increase the value of the meetings to both the GRA personnel and to the field at large.

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Special Assistant to Ch/G, GRM

Distribution:

- 2 - AD/RR
- 1 - St/A
- 20 - 1 copy to each GRA participant
- 2 - Ch/G

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